

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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Scrolling up

AMONG the highlights of last week's UK Jewish Film festival was *Commandment 613: A Sacred Craft*, a moving documentary about the work of Rabbi Kevin Hale, a Torah scribe who meticulously restores scrolls hidden and saved in Czechoslovakia during the Shoah.

Director Miriam Lewin told us that the experience of seeing a scroll close-up, hand-written as they have been for thousands of years, was "profound and powerful". In her film, Rabbi Hale, son of refugees from Nazi Germany, talks about a painstaking craft employing ancient techniques and traditional tools such as feather quills. Lewin had partly been drawn to the subject by Rabbi Hale's "spiritual journey" from secular Judaism to the deep, slow training required in his work and his reflection that this leads him in many ways to fulfil the final commandment in the Torah: to write the scroll itself. It is what he calls "a sacred publishing partnership, with God".

The Torah not only binds all Jews together. Interviewed in the film Jeffrey Ohrenstein, chairman of the London-based Memorial Scrolls Trust which loans the scrolls out to communities around the world, observes that



it is also the Pentateuch, revered by Christianity, and the Al Talwat, the Five Books of Musa revered by Islam.

WHEN ANDREW McDonald, who has died aged 59, was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2007, he wrote in *The Tablet*, "I am a fortunate man, a hopeful man." Three years later, he reflected, "The son of a Catholic mother and a Protestant, Fabian Father, I was raised to believe tomorrow could be better than today, but that I had a responsibility to make it so. Optimism and obligation were fused."

His friend the writer and editor Victor Smart tells us, "That tenet served Andrew well throughout his life as a public servant, though at some cost to himself. In the midst of the MPs' expenses scandal, he became the first chief executive of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, set up to clear up the mess. But IPSA was soon itself in the crosshairs as MPs stridently attacked it – and him – as overbearing."

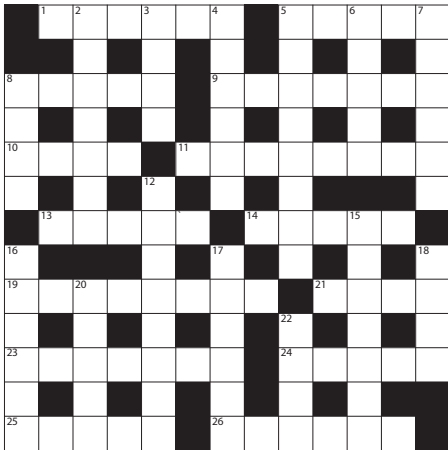
When McDonald was struck by a second serious illness, this time inoperable prostate cancer, he quit IPSA and threw himself into other work, such as chairing the charity Scope. In his *McBulletin* newsletter he railed against the inability of many medics to *listen*. He complained that he was often left feeling "disempowered, disrespected and disregarded".

Through it all, McDonald never lost his Tiggerish optimism. His final *McBulletin* was serene: "This is a curious interval. I am beyond my terminal date, not that that seems to mean a lot. I have a couple of articles yet to write. But all things considered I would rather see people – and read. Now reading presents more than its usual range of choices. *Dubliners* or *Ulysses*? The Epistles of St Paul or of St John? I think that one is easier – St John."

A memorial service will be held in Westminster Cathedral in January.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 782 Alanus



Across

- 1 Pagan god to whom children were sacrificed (6)
- 5 (& 12 Down): French Cistercian, patron saint of hermits, feast day 20 November (5,2,6)
- 8 Story in Joyce's *Dubliners* and "The Sheik of -----" classic jazz song (5)
- 9 Region of southeast Europe, with member states at war in 1913 and 1991 (7)
- 10 Village where Jesus raised the widow's son to life (Luke 7) (4)
- 11 Papal meeting of the College of Cardinals (8)
- 13 Ancient port of the Holy Land (5)
- 14 Of interest if not passion to a philatelist (5)
- 19 Very thin material as used in a funeral veil (8)

- 21 Initials often included on a crucifix indicating Jesus as King of the Jews (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Ancient Greek city where St John Chrysostom was born (7)
- 24 Interim name of Democratic Republic of Congo (1971-97) (5)
- 25 Famous rock in centre of Australia, World Heritage Site (5)
- 26 Dutch House and association with 13 Across (6)

Down

- 2 Unusual ancient instrument, a type of flute (7)
- 3 Antelope, the national animal of Oman (4)
- 4 Ancient city of the West Bank, from where King David reigned (2 Samuel) (6)

- 5 Early martyr saint, she is remembered in the Canon of the Mass (8)
- 6 City in the Himalayas, capital of Tibet (5)
- 7 Instrument a surgeon uses for scraping bones (6)
- 8 (& 18 Down): Saint and female Tyburn martyr who sheltered priests (4,4)
- 12 See 5 Across
- 15 Anglican clergyman convert who succeeded Wiseman as cardinal (7)
- 16 Herbivorous lizard, claimed to be a symbol of patience and contentment (6)
- 17 Father of Zipporah, wife of Moses (6)
- 18 See 8 Down (4)
- 20 Erik -----, friend of Debussy, influential composer of piano pieces (5)
- 22 Book of the O.T. and minor prophet (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 20 November, *The Tablet*, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 6GY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on Augustine, Christianity and Thomas Aquinas – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random. **■ We are processing entries but there may be a delay in notifying winners and sending out prizes. Please keep entering.**

SUDOKU | Moderate

			4	7				3	
							8	7	6
2		7					9		
				2					9
	2		8		6		5		
8				3					
			1				7		2
4	8	9							
6				1	3				

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution to the 30 October puzzle

5	4	9	6	2	3	8	1	7
7	6	8	9	4	1	2	3	5
2	1	3	7	8	5	4	9	6
3	5	4	8	6	2	9	7	1
6	9	2	4	1	7	3	5	8
1	8	7	3	5	9	6	2	4
4	2	5	1	9	8	7	6	3
8	7	1	2	3	6	5	4	9
9	3	6	5	7	4	1	8	2

Solution to the 30 October crossword No. 779

Across: 1 Of Hoy; 4 Finger; 9 Ferrari; 10 Out Of; 11 This; 12 Octavian; 14 Clavier; 19 Clappers; 20 Joel; 22 Aesop; 23 Ephraim; 24 Aumbry; 25 Sedan. **Down:** 1 Of Fate; 2 Hermit; 3 Year; 5 Idolater; 6 Gothic; 7 Rufina; 8 Discoveries; 13 Flypaper; 15 Achaia; 16 Hansom; 17 Howard; 18 Old Man; 21 Whys.

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